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# Idle-Time Rime



1. Poetry, American

P. 224

# Idle-Time Rime



Herbert Flansburgh

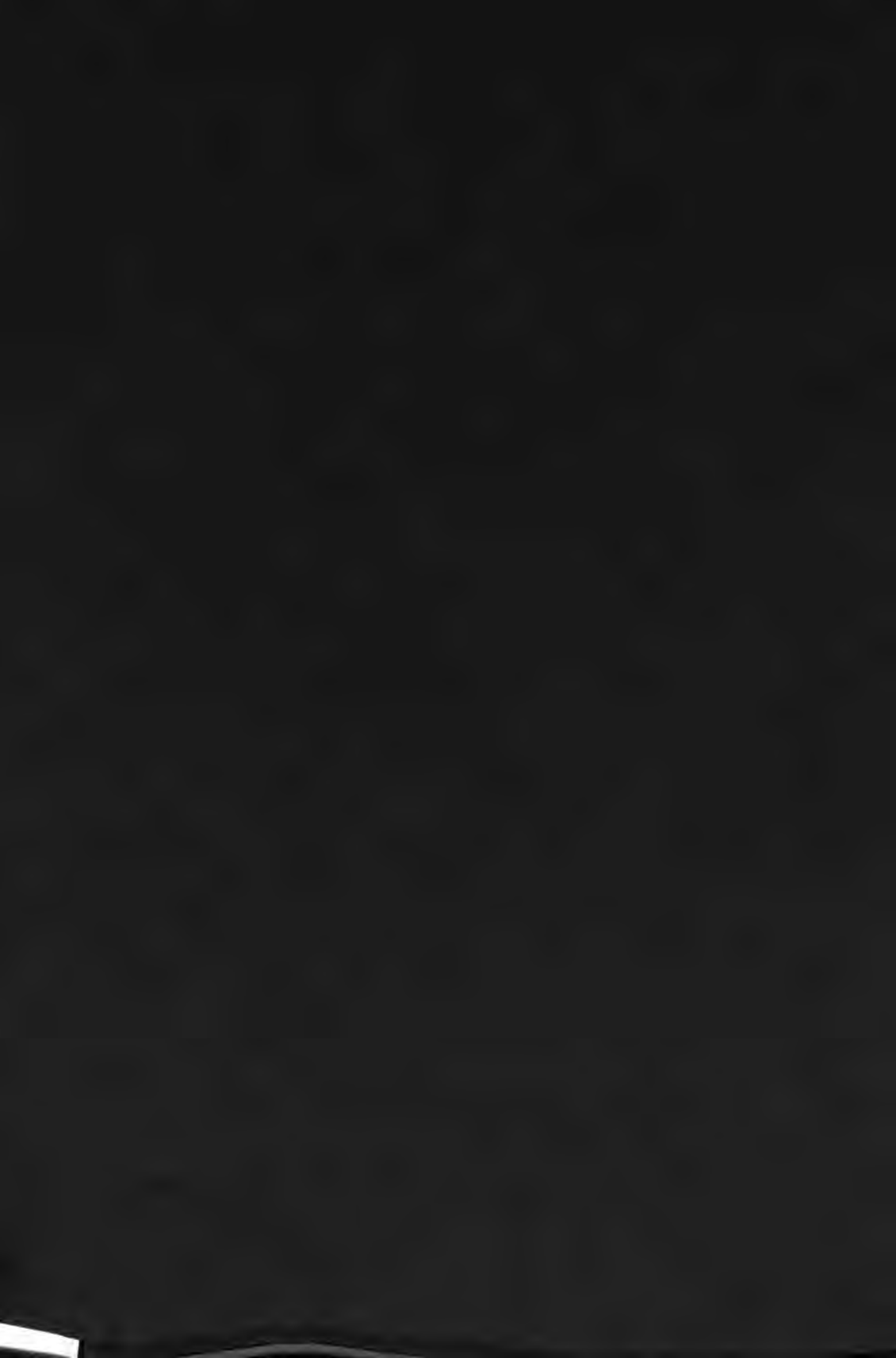
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1. Poetry, Emerson

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# Idle-Time Rime



Herbert Flansburgh

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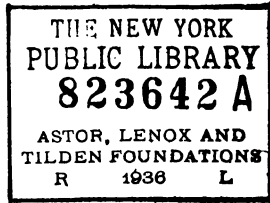
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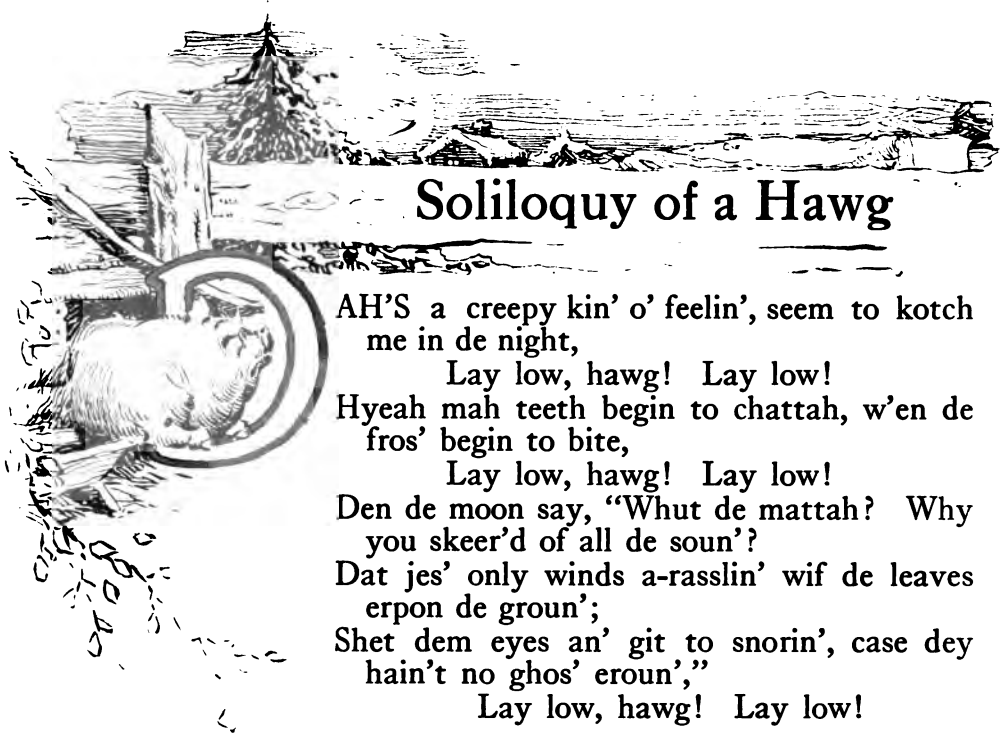
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**Many of Mr. Flansburgh's selections in this volume  
originally appeared in the following publications:**

<b>Success</b>	<b>Broadway Magazine</b>
<b>Boston Transcript</b>	<b>Toledo Times</b>
<b>Christian Herald</b>	<b>Cleveland Plain Dealer</b>
<b>Columbia (S. C.) State</b>	<b>San Francisco Examiner</b>
<b>Chicago Record Herald</b>	





## Soliloquy of a Hawg

AH'S a creepy kin' o' feelin', seem to kotch  
me in de night,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

Hyeah mah teeth begin to chattah, w'en de  
fros' begin to bite,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

Den de moon say, "Whut de mattah? Why  
you skeer'd of all de soun'?"

Dat jes' only winds a-rasslin' wif de leaves  
erpon de groun';

Shet dem eyes an' git to snorin', case dey  
hain't no ghos' eroun',"

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

I's aware de day's fu' rootin' an' de night time's made fu'  
sleep,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

But dey's heaps o' tho'ts I's thinkin' w'en de shaddahs 'gin  
to creep,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

I's feelin' moughty 'spicious of de t'ings I hyeah an' see,  
Case de fahmah git too frien'ly an' de cohn git mos' too free,  
So I reckon sompin's comin' whut it won't be good fu' me,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

I's noticed how de missis pat mah haid an' rub mah back,  
Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

Den de chillun fotch me foddah, all dey li'l arms kin pack,  
Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

Dat ol' gobble tuhkey see me an' he say, "You's lookin'  
prime!"

Evah t'ink erbout de feastin' of de folks Thanksgivin' time?  
You ain't got no wings fu' flyin' an' you's mos' too fat to  
climb,"

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

Goodness lan's! de sun's a-risin' an' I hasn't  
slep' a wink,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

Got a feelin' dat I's 'proachin' moughty neah  
destruction's brink,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

I kin hyeah de squeaky grindstone an' de  
raspin' of de knife,

Hit's de saddes' kin' o' music dat I's hyeahd  
in all mah life,

Spec' de time is gittin' nigher fu' to end dis  
earfly strife,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

Smoke a-oozin' f'um de smoke-house, look  
jes' lak a mournin' veil,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

Dah's dat on'ry fahmah comin' wif a stickin'  
knife an' pail,

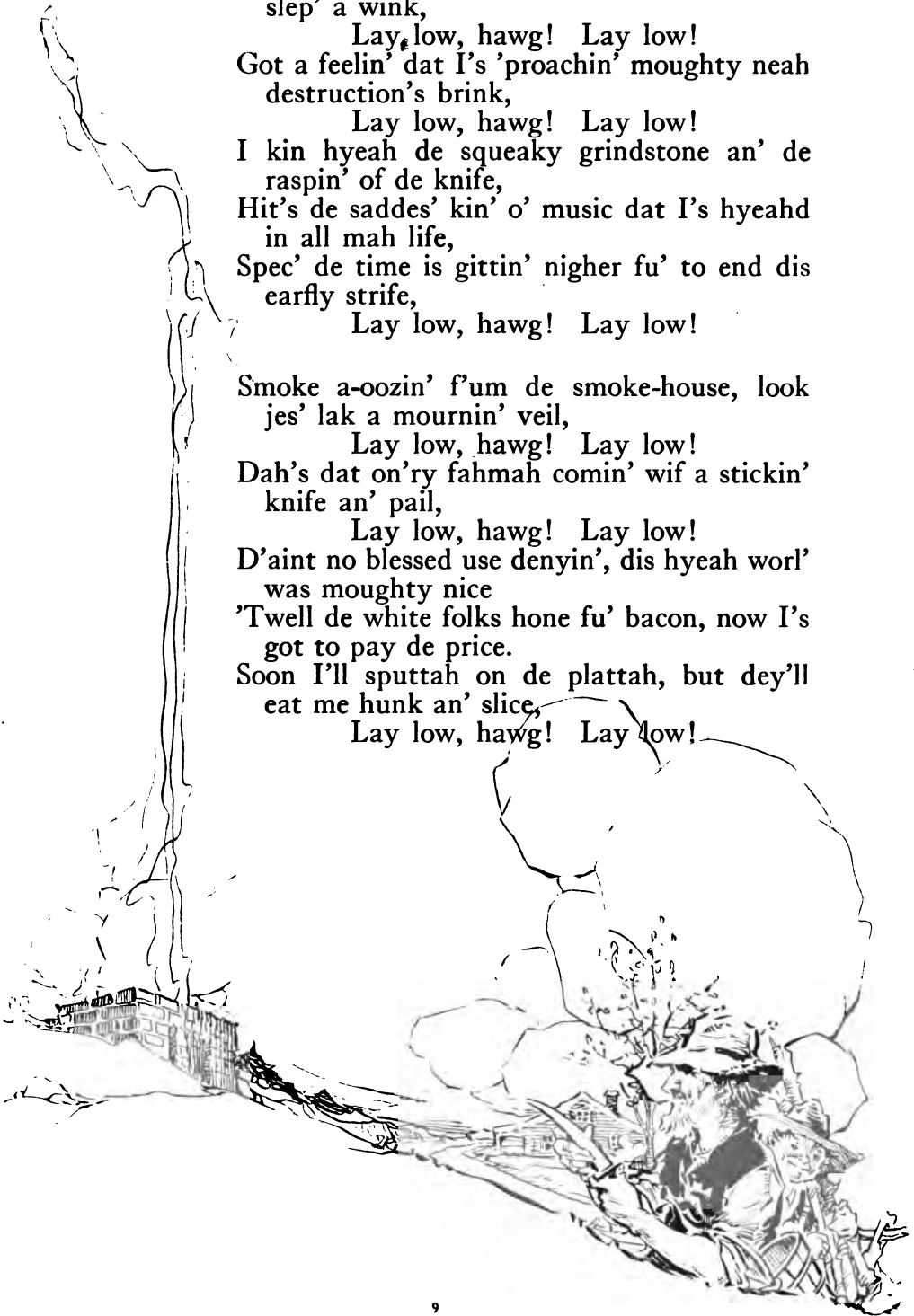
Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

D'aint no blessed use denyin', dis hyeah worl'  
was moughty nice

'Twell de white folks hone fu' bacon, now I's  
got to pay de price.

Soon I'll sputtah on de plattah, but dey'll  
eat me hunk an' slice,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!





## Li'l Drum

W

HUT'S de mattah wid yo' noise  
Li'l Drum?

Hit's as silent as de toys  
Li'l Drum!

Top an' bottom busted in  
Dust an' rust am on de tin,  
Whaih de tunin' straps hab been,  
Li'l Drum!

Dat ol' hole look mighty bad,  
Li'l Drum!

Droopin' lak a mouf dat's sad,  
Li'l Drum!

Dem two li'l holes in you  
Whaih de sticks go pokin' froo,  
Lak de baby's eyes o' blue  
Li'l Drum.

'Membah how ol' mammy scol'  
Li'l Drum;

When de racket git too bol'  
Li'l Drum?

Dat was music low an' sweet,  
'Side de noise ob silent feet  
Dat hab halted wid yo' beat  
Li'l Drum!

Am yo' heart so sad an' so'  
Li'l Drum;  
Dat you cain't tune up no mo'  
Li'l Drum?  
Seems I hyeah you gib a sigh—  
Lak de baby did, an' cry,  
When he kiss an' say—"Goo'-by  
Li'l Drum!"

I's a-feelin' sad myse'f—  
Li'l Drum:  
You is all dat I's got lef'  
Li'l Drum!  
Teahs am patterin' to-day,  
On yo' haid, lak baby play—  
Fo' de Lawd tuk him away,  
Li'l Drum.

Mighty ha'd to tote de load,  
Li'l Drum:  
Ploddin' 'long de lonely road—  
Li'l Drum!  
But de One dat know de bes'—  
Gwine to call us up to res'  
Wid de baby on His breas',  
Li'l Drum!







# Come Back Honey, Come Back

I's a-longin' fu' you Lindy e'vy minute ob de day,  
Come back, Honey,—come back!

Oh de road am long an' lonely, an' dey's shaddahs  
on de way,

Come back, Honey,—come back!

You know I loves you dahlin', an' you know mah  
heart am true.

I loves you lak de roses in de gyarden loves de dew,  
Dat's de reason why I miss you, dat's de reason I's  
so blue.

Come back, Honey,—come back!

De honeysuckle's twinin' all eroun' de cabin do',  
Come back, Honey,—come back!

But dey's droopin' sad an' weary, an' dey don'  
smell sweet no mo'.

Come back, Honey,—come back!

Dah's de banjo in de co'nah, but he done fergot  
de ring,

Case mah fingahs git so trimbly w'en dey try to  
plunk de string,

An' I feel a lump a-chokin' at de on'y song I sing.

Come back, Honey,—come back!

I's a-waitin' fu' you Lindy by de cabin do' to-night,  
Come back, Honey,—come back!

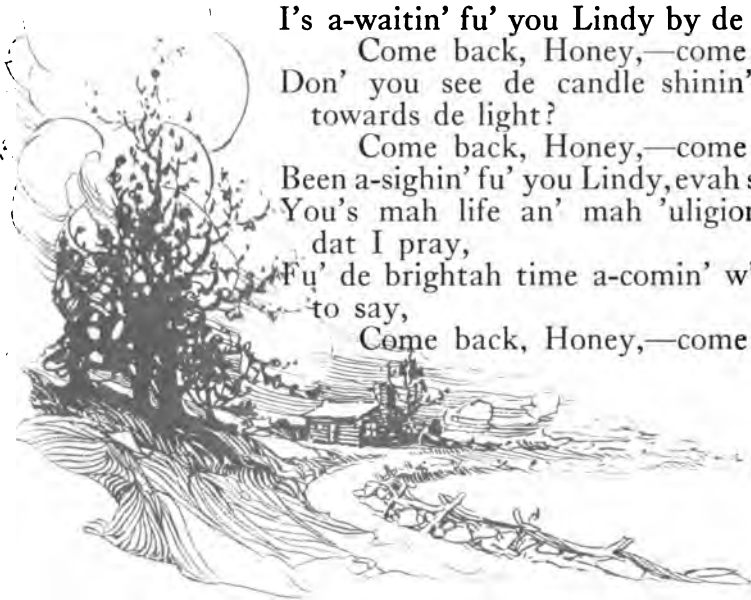
Don' you see de candle shinin'? Is you walkin'  
towards de light?

Come back, Honey,—come back!

Been a-sighin' fu' you Lindy, evah sence you go erway,  
You's mah life an' mah 'uligion, you's de reason  
dat I pray,

Fu' de brightah time a-comin' w'en I'll nevah hab  
to say,

Come back, Honey,—come back!



# The Boys in Gray

*(Confederate Veterans' Reunion, Columbia, S. C., May, 1903)*

De boys in gray is gaddered in Columbia  
to-day—

Stan'in' shoulder up to shoulder, lak dey  
went into de fray.

Some is big uns, some is little, mos' am crippled  
up an' ol',

But dey's lookin' mighty perky an' dey's  
feelin' mighty bol'.

Fro' yo' ches' out, Mistah Sojer, hol' yo'  
haid up in de air!

Hyeah dem noisy drums a-beatin', see de  
vet'uns ev'ywhaih?

Dey is loafin' hyah an' yandah, dey is marchin'  
froo de street;

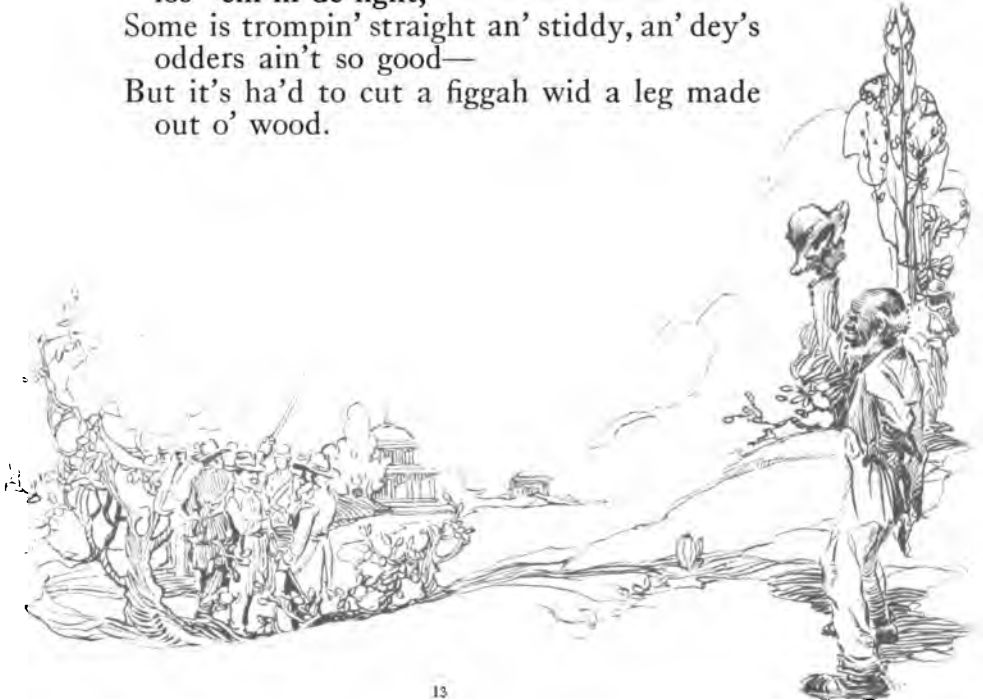
How dat tune of "Down in Dixie" seem to  
limbah up dere feet!

Com'ads shakin' by de lef' han' an' dey's  
shakin' by de right,

An' dey's han's dat ain't a-shakin' 'case dey  
los' 'em in de fight,

Some is trompin' straight an' stiddy, an' dey's  
odders ain't so good—

But it's ha'd to cut a figgah wid a leg made  
out o' wood.



Dey's a mighty heap o' silence roun' de rusty  
cannon's mouf'  
Decorated wid magnolias an' de roses of de  
Souf:  
An' de sojers marchin' by it, tuhn erway an'  
gib a sigh  
As dey see demselves in battle froo de teah-  
drap in dere eye.

Dey is some dat fail to answer w'en de sergeant  
call de roll,  
But dere spirits is a-callin' ev'ry vet'un sojer's  
soul.  
Soon dey'll all march off to glory, wid de Blue  
an' Gray abreast,  
Wid de Lawd as dere commander in de fiel'  
of Heavenly Rest.





## Waitin' at de Do'

Hit's a moughty soothin' feelin' at de closin' ob de day,  
W'en I finish out de furrer an' I put de plough erway,  
An' I tuhn de tired mule out in de medder lot to res',  
An' I walk ercross de stubble to de place I love de  
bes'—

I fergit de sweat o' labor, an' I ain't so lame an' so  
Case I know mah wife an' chillun is a-waitin' at de  
do'!

You kin talk erbout yo' glory, an' yo' rapture, an' yo'  
bliss,

Hesh yo' mouf! Dey hain't a patchin' 'side o' Lucy's  
lovin' kiss—


An' yo'd raily t'ink I's honey, jes' a-oozin' f'om de hive  
W'en de chillun 'gin a-swarmin' lak dey'd eat me up erlive.  
Tell you, man; dey's pleasure livin' dat I nevah know  
befo'

I had de wife, an' chillun, waitin' fu' me at de do'.

W'en we gaddah roun' de table, hongry fu' de ev'nin'  
meal—

W'ile mah Lucy ax de blessin', in mah heart I sort o' steal  
A humble little prayah to Him, a-watchin' up above—  
To keep ouh feet a ploddin', in de paf'way ob His love,  
'Twell hit seem dat He kin hyeah me, an' He leave de  
golden sho'

An' share de meal wid me and dem dat waited at de do'.

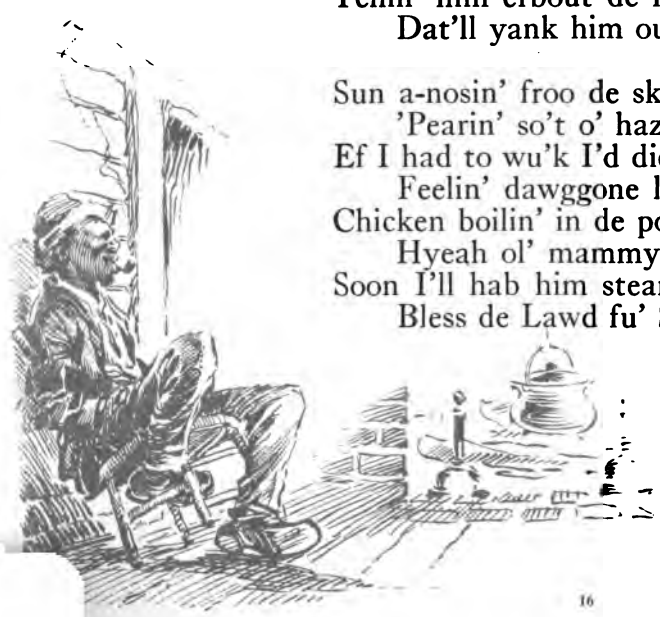


## Signs of Spring

Rain a-pourin' f'om de skies,  
Grass a-peepin' out,  
Groun'hawg rubbin' bofe his eyes,  
Seein' whut's erbout.  
Robin pullin' on de wohm  
Wigglin' in de groun',  
Li'l snake done 'gun to squirm  
Whah he cain't be foun'.

Lark a-settin' on de limb,  
Tunin' up his voice,  
Sassy crow a-mockin' him,  
Itchin' to rejoice.  
Jay a-sighin' fu' a mate,  
Lookin' moughty blue;  
Hain't no time to hesitate,  
Mates am gittin' few.

Hyeah dat ol' hen 'gin to squawk  
Lak she's feelin' sick,  
One eye lookin' fu' a hawk,  
D' odder on huh chick.  
Heifer loafin' by de brook,  
Talkin' to de trout;  
Tellin' him erbout de hook  
Dat'll yank him out.



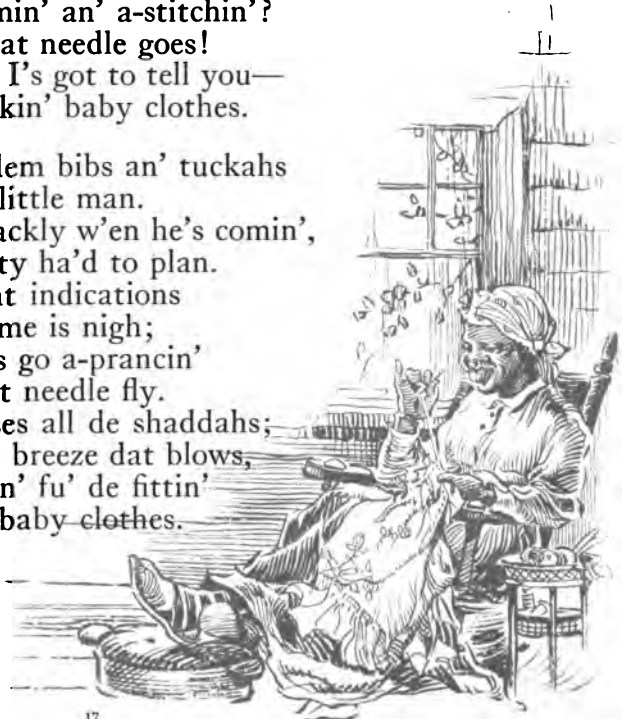
Sun a-nosin' froo de sky,  
'Pearin' so't o' hazy,  
Ef I had to wu'k I'd die—  
Feelin' dawggone lazy.  
Chicken boilin' in de pot,  
Hyeah ol' mammy sing;  
Soon I'll hab him steamin' hot—  
Bless de Lawd fu' Spring.

# Preparation

Guess you wondah whut's de reason  
I's so happy all de time—  
How's a pusson gwine to help it  
Wid his spirits feelin' prime?  
Ef you t'ink mah haid is ailin',  
Case I's laughin' all de day,  
Don' you pay no 'tention to me,  
Hesh yo' mouf an' go yo' way.  
Well now, seein' you's so cu'ious  
Fu' to know whut's ticklin' me,  
Jes you peek into de cabin dah  
An' tell me what you see.

Dah now, don' you ax no questions,  
Dah's de do' flung open wide;  
Cain't you see de great commotion,  
Dat's a-gwine on inside?  
See ol' Mammy dah a-sewin'?  
Whut's de mattah wid yo' eyes?  
Cain't you reckon whut she's makin'  
F'om de nature an' de size?  
See huh hemmin' an' a-stitchin'?  
Lawsy, how dat needle goes!  
Bless de lam', I's got to tell you—  
Mammy's makin' baby clothes.

Got to have dem bibs an' tuckahs  
Ready fu' de little man.  
Don' know 'zackly w'en he's comin',  
So it's moughty ha'd to plan.  
But de present indications  
Indicate de time is nigh;  
So mah spirits go a-prancin'  
W'en I see dat needle fly.  
Sunshine chases all de shaddahs;  
Praise is in de breeze dat blows,  
Case I's waitin' fu' de fittin'  
Of dem little baby clothes.





## The Arrival

Liza, fotch dem skil'uds, hyeah me!  
 Don' you know, chile, whah dey's at?  
 Want to weigh dis bran' new baby;  
 Goodness lan's, but ain't he fat!  
 He done come eroun' dis mo'nin',  
 Reckon fu' to stay a while;  
 Feel him growin' e'vy minute!  
 Whah dem skil'uds? Hurry, chile!

Seem lak ef he weigh a hunderd!  
 Lawsy, Liza; but you's slow!  
 'Less'n you don't come dis minute,  
 'Speck I'll drap him on de flo'!  
 Hyah dey is! Now, quit dat squhmin',  
 Li'l manny! Stop, I say!  
 Ain't you cu'ious, you rascal,  
 Fu' to know how much you weigh?

Lay still now an' lemme tie dis  
 Hyah ol' knot up in you' dress;  
 Liza, poke dat hook right froo it,  
 Keerful, now! don't skun his ches'!  
 Hol' him stiddy! Help me lif' him!  
 Goodness, how dem skil'uds boun'!  
 Now I's got you, li'l manny!  
 Bless de Lawd! Jes' fo'teen poun'!

Dah now, ain't you glad I weigh you?  
 Whut's de use to kick an' cry!  
 See you' sister Liza laffin'.  
 We gwine whup huh by-an'-by!  
 Put you' arms eroun' you' Pappy,  
 Lemme kiss dat teah erway!  
 Case I kiss you, dat's de meanin',  
 Dat I welcomes you to-day!



## Spring Glory

Ev'ry season got dere pleasure,  
Some has mo' an' some has less—  
Hit depen' erpon de pusson,  
Which de one he lak de bes'.  
Some folks t'ink de Wintah fines'  
Some lak whut de Summah bring;  
Ef dey ax me my opinion  
I jes' hollah—"Gimme Spring!"

Spring's de season I's a-praisin'  
Know dey's wuk to do fu' sho';  
But my han's ain't got no itchin'  
Fu' de handle ob de hoe.  
I got biz'ness in de meddah,  
Lis'nin' to dem vi'lets say—  
"Step right up an' tell me howdy!  
Dis is my erception day".

Evaht'ing seem moughty frien'ly,  
W'en de Springtime come erlong,  
Dawgwood blossoms nod dey 'bejunce  
Robin ansah wid a song.  
Catfish swimmin' in de bayou  
Wag his tail to Mistah Frog.  
Frog, he grinnin' at de tuhtle  
Out dah sunnin' on de log.





Fahmah in de lot a-ploughin'  
Whoa his mule an' look eroun'  
At de crow an' tuhky buzzard,  
Feastin' on de wohm dey foun'—  
Bluejay come erlong an' ax 'em  
How's dey far'in'. Den dey say,  
"Dis wohm moughty sweet an' tendah—  
Won't you hab some, Mistah Jay?"

Apple blossoms sof' as feddahs  
Drappin' down to kiss de grass,  
Seems I hyeah de rain-draps giggle  
Ez dey go a-scootin' pas'.  
Laws a-massy! Ain't it splen'id?  
Evaht'ing we hyeah an' see,  
Full o' glory of de Springtime  
Shakin' hands wid you an' me.





## Bacon on de Side

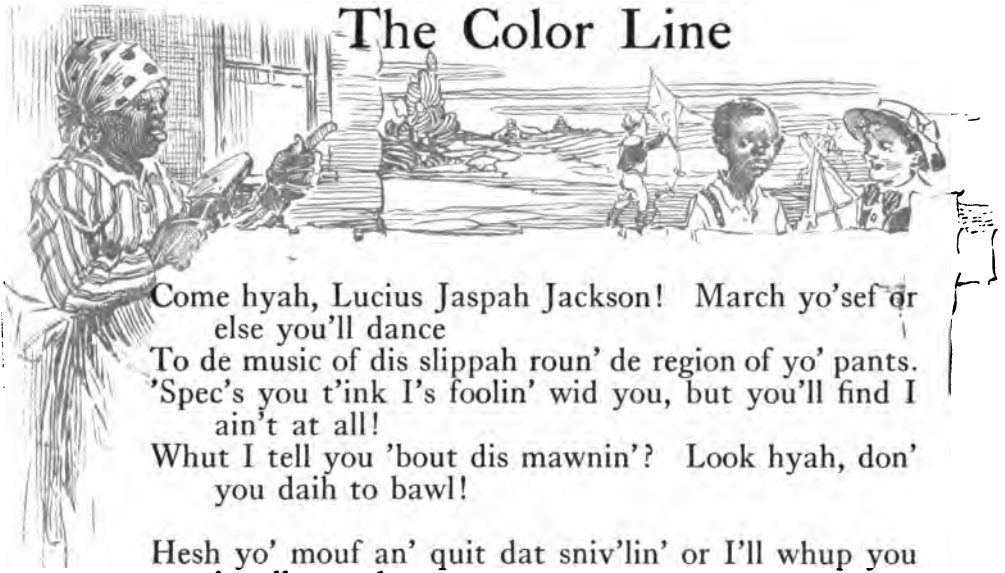
Ev'ybody sings de praises of de things dey lak to eat—  
Some folks say dat ham's de fines', some folks lak de chicken  
meat,  
An' dey's some dat sw'ah dey's nuffin' lak a po'k chop good  
an' brown,  
W'en dey's heaps o' creamy gravy, fu' to slide de po'k chop  
down;  
But of all de sweetes' eatin' dat a mortal evah tried,  
Pass me jes' a dish o' spinach wif some bacon on de' side.

Tek a mess o' tendah spinach, flavored wif de sun an' soil;  
Poke it in de pot an' hang it in de fiahplace to boil.  
W'en de spinach 'gins to simmah so's to tell you whah it's at,  
Lif' de lid an' slide in bacon, luscious lean, wif streaks o' fat.  
Cose dey's goodness in de spinach, but whut tickle up de pride  
Is dat good ol' hunk o' bacon, drippin' sweetness on de side.

Dey ain't no way o' tellin' whut dey eats in glory lan',  
But I reckon w'en de time is nigh fu' me to tek mah stan'  
At de Golden Gate up yandah whah de good folks f'om below  
Lay down all dey earfly buhdens—ev'y  
blessed sin an' woe—  
It will seem mo' lak I's welcome, w'en de Gate  
am open wide,  
Ef ol' Peter'll pass de spinach wif some bacon  
on de side!



## The Color Line



Come hyah, Lucius Jaspah Jackson! March yo'sef or  
else you'll dance  
To de music of dis slippah roun' de region of yo' pants.  
'Spec's you t'ink I's foolin' wid you, but you'll find I  
ain't at all!  
Whut I tell you 'bout dis mawnin'? Look hyah, don'  
you daih to bawl!

Hesh yo' mouf an' quit dat sniv'lin' or I'll whup you  
'twell you drap.  
Ef dis slippah fail de biz'ness, I'll git dat ol' razzah strap.  
Whut de mattah wif yo' mem'ry? I declaih you drives  
me wil'—  
Whut you mean by goin' out dar hangin' roun' dem  
white folks' chile?

I done hyeah dat white boy tell you, he gwine bus' yo'  
mouf fu' sho',  
I was waitin' fu' de bustin' standin' right dah in de do'.  
Guess you t'ink mah ears don' listen! Reckon dese  
two eyes don' see?  
Oh, I know dat conversation, keerful chile! don' fool  
wid me!

Now I ain't a-gwine to whup you, but I tell you dis  
fu' sho',  
Don' you nevah let me kotch you wid dem white folks'  
chile no mo'.  
White folks t'ink dere chillun fines', an' I know dey's  
moughty fine,  
But dere color's de objection, so I draws de color line.

# Fireside Tales

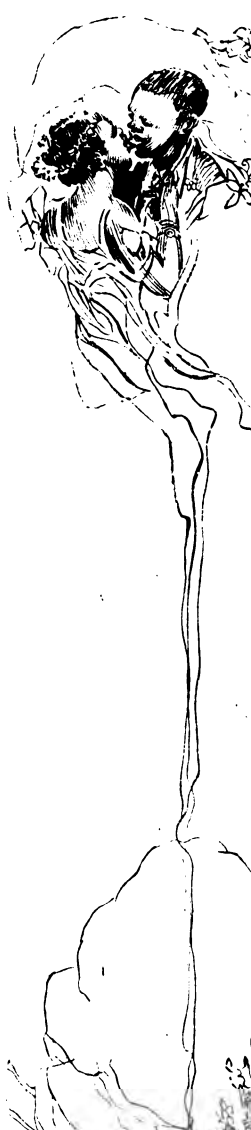
W'en I hyeah de win's a-sighin' ez de moon comes roun' de hill,  
An' de shadders dance de quad'ille on de groun'—  
W'en de owls hoot out dey "Who dah?" so's to skeer de  
    whippo'will,  
Hit's a monst'ous loud an' lonely kin' o' soun';  
But de log's a-buhnin' cheery an' de ol' pipe's drawin' free,  
De owls kin hoot, an' win's kin moan an' wail—  
I'se mighty rich an' happy wid de baby on mah knee  
A-coaxin' fu' to hyeah a fiahside tale.

I don' puhten' to notice how he snuggles to me tight  
An' rolls his eyes an' kin' o' hol's his breaf;  
Den I say, "Mah little honey, I cain't tell no tale to-night,  
Case dem hoot owls got me skeered almos' to deaf."  
But he knows I's only foolin', so he cuhls up lak a ball,  
W'ile I tell him ev'y blessed kin' o' tale;  
'Tain' no use fu' me to choose 'em, case he's boun' to hyeah  
    'em all,  
F'om Ridin' Hood to Jonah an' de Whale.

'Bout de time de whale git Jonah, den de Sandman come erlong,  
An' he say, "Now I's got *you*, ol' sleepy haid!"  
Den mah Liza fix de pallet, an' she croons huh sweetes' song  
W'ile she tucks de little manny in his baid.  
W'en I see him sleepin' peaceful, den I wish wid all mah heart  
Dat his bark of life will nevah meet de gales;  
But mos' of all I'se wishin' dat we nevah gwine to part—  
An' say good-by to all de fiahside tales.



# The Parting



Feelin' pow'ful blue!  
Shaky thoo an' thoo!  
Specs I's gwine to have a tetch o' fevah.  
Pulse am runnin' high!  
Teahdrap in mah eye,  
Case I had to say "goo'by" an' leave huh.


Hel' mah dahlin's han',  
Feelin' moughty gran',  
W'en she whispah in mah ear—she love me.  
Couldn't say a word,  
Silent as de bird,—  
Sleepin' in de little nes' erbove me.

Tasted ob huh lips,  
Lak de dew dat drips  
Down to kiss de sweet magnolia blossom,  
Pressin' close to mine,  
Spahklin' as de wine,  
Sweetah dan a roasted shoat, or possum!

Heart begun to jump,  
Felt a chokin' lump  
W'en I tell huh, "Now we mus' be pahtin'!"  
Seem lak if a daht  
Run huh thoo' de heart  
An' I seen de pearly teahs a-startin'.

Tuhn huh haid eroun',  
Lookin' at de groun'  
W'en I tell huh how I's gwine to miss huh.  
Tol' huh not to weep,  
Case I's gwine to keep  
True to huh forevah—den I kiss huh.

Go ahaid an' laugh!  
Whut I keer fu' chaff?  
Lovesick fevah's buhnin', an' I shows it!  
Now I's gwine erway,  
But a latah day  
We gwine see de pahson, an' I knows it!



# Snoozin' by de Fiah

Ol' Mose, nevah frisk eroun'  
'Nuff to mek him tiah,  
Jes' plumb sartain to be foun'  
Snoozin' by de fiah.

W'en de snow was ev'ywhaih,  
Col' win' blowin' nighah,  
He was in de settin'-chaih  
Snoozin' by de fiah.

Nevah hyeah him mek a peep,  
'Cept to say "Mariah,  
Fotch de wood so I kin keep  
Snoozin' by de fiah."

W'en he dies you 'spose he'll go  
To de heavenly choir?  
Bet fo' bits he'll be below—  
Snoozin' by de fiah.





## Politics

Dah's a aggravatin' problem dat's a  
pesterin' mah min',  
An' de way to solve de problem is de  
way I'd lak to fin',  
Case erlection time's a-comin' an' dem  
politicians say  
Hit depen' erpon mah votin' how dey  
gwine to save de day.

Hit's de beat'nes kin' o' doin's how dem  
pahty leadahs acts  
W'en dey shake mah han' an' tell me  
all de figgers an' de fac's,  
An' dey sho' git me a-guessin' w'en dey  
treat me so perlite,  
Lak I's gwine to be de hero in de greates'  
kin' o' fight.

Fus' de Democratahs kotch me an' dey  
say: "Now, Uncle Dan—  
Cose you gwine to vote ouh ticket fu'  
de welfaih ob de lan',"   
An' dey go ahaid an' argy dey'll be ruin  
sho's you bawn  
If dey fails to git de office w'en it comes  
to 'lection mawn.

Dey jes' go on wid dere talkin' an' dey  
 say de case look glum  
 Ef de 'Publicans is 'lected ruination's  
 boun' to come,  
 An' dey's sump'in sad and glumpy in de  
 looks erpon dere face  
 W'en dey tell erbout de ha'd times gwine  
 to hit de cullud race.

Den de 'Publicans dey nab me an' say  
 dey's in de right,  
 An' dey ax me fu' to buckle on mah  
 armah fu' de fight;  
 Ef de Democratahs wins it dey'll be  
 sorrer ev'ywhaih,  
 An' de cullud folks 'll waller in de miah  
 of despaih.

Now I rassled wid de bofe sides ob de  
 question, 'twell it seem  
 Evaht'ing is gwine to curdle an' nobody'll  
 git de cream;  
 Sence de ruin sho' is comin' I'll tek  
 chances wid de res',  
 But I t'ink I'll do de votin' fu' de side  
 whut pay de bes'.





## A Fable



De ol' crow set in de hick'ry tree,  
De fat hawg root beneaf,  
De crow he caw an' he laugh "haw, haw!"  
Den de hawg, he show his teef.  
De crow say, "Hawg, you's pow'ful fat,  
Whah did you git dem big sides at?"  
Den de hawg git mad ez a hawg kin be,  
An' he try fu' to climb up de hick'ry tree  
To kotch dat crow an' eat him down,  
But de crow he laugh at de ol' hawg's frown—  
He tip-toe out on de littles' limb,  
An' dis is de sass he talk to him:

"Yo' jowls hang down lak a double chin,  
An' hide yo' mouf whah de cohn goes in;  
Yo' shouldahs look lak dey gwine to make  
De fines' meat fu' to roas' er bake,  
An' it 'peahs to me f'om yo' bulgin' hide  
Dey's some tendah po'k chops tucked inside.  
Kin you see dis limb hyah, whah I set?  
Dis hick'ry wood gwine to smoke you yet.  
Oh! you needn't grunt an' you needn't sigh  
Case de butchah'll git you by an' by;  
He'll whet his knife, an' he'll stick you hard,  
He'll try yo' fat fu' to git de lard;  
He'll rip you up an' he'll scrope you down,  
He'll smoke yo' sides 'twell dey done tuhn brown.  
My! My! dat'll be one likely treat  
W'en I git a taste of yo' sweetes' meat."

Mistah Hawg look skeer'd an' he 'gin to wail,  
 He trimble f'om his snout to his limpy tail;  
 But de crow he laugh, lak a crow dat's glad,  
 An' de hawg he weep lak a hawg dat's sad.  
 He try fu' to run but he was so fat  
 Dat he tumble down whah he started at.  
 Mistah Crow call de butchah an' he drewed  
 his knife,  
 An' dat was de end of de fat hawg's life.



He swung dat hawg f'om de hick'ry tree,  
 An' he built a fiah whah de crow cu'd see;  
 Den de smoke riz up lak de smoke will do,  
 An' it smoke de fat meat froo an' froo.  
 W'en he git mos' done den de butchah say,  
 "Ain't you hongry, Crow? Jes pass dis way—  
 Ef it's sweetes' meat dat you mos' desiah,  
 Hyah's ham an' bacon, an' dah's de fiah—  
 Dey ain't no money you got to pay,  
 So cook yo' dinnah an' eat erway."

De crow tuck a oak leaf 'neaf his chin,  
 An' de way he et was a mortal sin;  
 He gulp dat hawg meat cleah an' clean,  
 Didn't leave a pickin' fat er lean;  
 Dat crow done gorge hisse'f to deaf,  
 An' dis whut he say wif his dyin' breaf:

"He'll rip you up an' he'll scrope you down,  
 He'll smoke yo' sides 'twell dey done tuhn brown,  
 At las' I's had one toof'some treat,  
 An' I's gwine to glory full o' sweet hawg meat!"





## The Pacifier

Shuffle on yo' way, Ike Jackson! Needn't  
hang 'roun' hyah no mo',  
I ain't honin' fu' yo' courtin', so jes'  
vacate fru' dat do';  
Once I love you true as sayin', now mah  
heart am tuhn'd to stone,  
Don't keer nuffin' 'bout you nohow, fade  
away an' lemme 'lone.

You done cut a moughty capah at de  
bahbahs' ball las' night,  
Gallavantin' wif dat pusson whut de folks  
call Lindy White;  
Seen huh roll huh eyes up tendah, seen  
you hug huh lak a bah,  
An' you scorn'd me lak a lizard, w'en  
you seen me settin' dah.

Lindy sho give you de mitten, so de folks say, flung you down!  
Now you t'ink de ol' love's sweetes', so you's projickin' eroun';  
But it ain't no use, Ike Jackson, case I'll nevah change mah plan,  
I's pertic'lah who I marries, an' you ain't mah kin' o' man.

Shake han's, Ike, an' let's be pahtin'! Hol' on! Whut dat 'hind  
yo' back?  
You ain't tryin' to tease me, is you? Orter give you one smaht  
whack.  
Got a pacifyin' present? Sho it is! Now lemme see!  
Goodness lan's, dat's chicken, honey; an' you fotch it hyah  
fu' me?

Look hyah, Ike, you's moughty sassy. T'ink I don't git 'nuff to  
eat?  
Lawsy, but mah mouf perspiah, lookin' at dat sweetes' meat!  
Hyah's de skillet, dah's de pullet, hyah's de gal whut love you  
bes';  
Bless de lam'! Let's do de eatin', den we'll talk erbout de res'!

# Sweetening

If you want this old world to be sweeter,  
When hustling for honors and pelf,  
You'd better get busy, my brother,  
And sprinkle some sugar yourself!

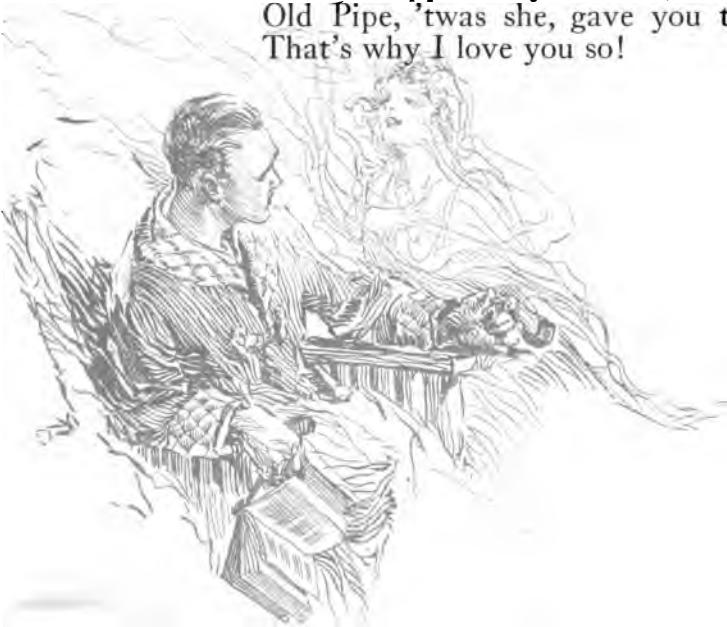


# Chums

Come on Old Pipe! The time is ripe  
For me to have a smoke,  
To sit and rest, and muse and jest  
And call all care a joke.  
What though the rain bedim the pane,  
And winds howl in affright!  
Contentment sips wine from your lips,  
And drips on me to-night.

Your smoke unfurls in graceful curls,  
And robes me with a calm  
That warms the heart and soothes the  
smart  
Of life, with fragrant balm.  
My fireplace here bestows a cheer,  
My armchair lends an ease,  
But you impart the subtle art  
That blends us all in peace.

I blow your smoke in rings that yoke  
In retrospection's chain,  
Until it winds and gently binds  
Old joys to me again.  
And in the grace of smoky lace  
*Her* face appears—you know,  
Old Pipe, 'twas she, gave you to me—  
That's why I love you so!



## Loss

Farewell! said I to my conscience—  
Farewell to you now for aye,  
You've goaded me long with my sinning,  
And now I shall cast you away.  
Time was when you held me in bondage—  
Time was when you ruled deep within,  
But now I shall need you no longer—  
I am free to go forth and sin.

Come back! Come back! O, my conscience!  
I cried from my soul's deep grief—  
So weary I've grown of my sinning!  
I long for your brave relief.  
Oh, bring back the strength of your guidance!  
Why, Oh, why! make me wait?  
Then the ghost of my conscience answered  
"You have called me too late—too late!"

# Curly Head

(To M. A. H.)

I can see your eyelids falling, put your little toys away,  
Curly Head!

You have romped and gathered posies since the waking of the day,  
Curly Head!

Let your little feet that pattered till the sandman came along,  
Tip-toe off to baby dreamland, keeping time with mother's song.  
I will guard your priceless treasures, and your china doll shall keep  
A watchful eye upon you, while you rest in peaceful sleep,  
Curly Head!

I will place the flowers you gathered, dear, upon your pillow there  
Curly Head!

This budding rose shall be entwined in locks of golden hair,  
Curly Head!

Sleep well and dream, my little one, for when the night has flown  
The morn will find you like the rose, to fullest blossom blown.  
My lullabys will ebb away as womanhood appears,  
For older songs and older cares, and older sadder tears,  
Curly Head!

Hold your little baby tighter, as you rock her to and fro,  
Curly Head!

Sing her all the songs of babyland you heard so long ago!  
Curly Head!

You are holding heaven near you, let your notes be sweet and light,  
As the echo of the whippoorwill shed on the ears of night.  
From babyhood to motherhood, and soon your day will close,  
And earthly joys will wither like the petals of the rose,  
Curly Head!

The night is drawing nearer, lay your heavy burden down,  
Curly Head!

Fulfilled has been your mission, you have earned the fairest crown,  
Curly Head!

You were sent to bud and blossom all in but a fleeting day,  
The star of love your beacon—God is calling you away;  
Take these roses for your pillow, kiss them, dear, and let their  
spell

Of mystic perfume waft you up to Him, and so—farewell,  
Curly Head!

# The Bauble

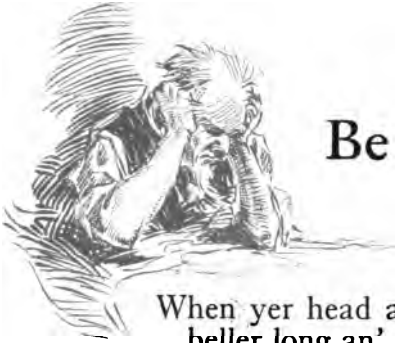
## At Morn

I paused beside a cradle and beheld a baby there  
Folded in the calm of slumber, holier it seemed than  
prayer—  
The sleeping eyes through misty dreams gazed in 'o realms  
of rest—  
And waking, saw no world beyond the loving mother's  
breast.  
Sweet mother-breast hid from its sight the crags of earthly  
strife,  
A bauble rested in its hand—the bauble we call—Life.

## At Night

I gazed within a grave and saw an old man fast asleep—  
The years had stroked his brow and left the furrows long  
and deep.  
The lips though dumb were eloquent, and told me of the  
rest  
For him who smiles and labors though his heart be  
weariest.  
The gray hair weaved a fairer crown than ever king has  
worn—  
The calloused hand was empty—the bauble, Life—was  
gone.





## Be Thankful

When yer head an' heart are weary, an' you  
beller long an' loud,

An' you feel a fittin' subject to be measured  
fer a shroud,

Set an' figger up yer blessin's 'stid o' always  
findin' fault

An' a-lookin' as dejected as a sick cow lickin'  
salt.

Ain't no use to whine an' snivel, ain't no use  
a-gittin' glum,

'Cause you've got to do yer doin's, takin' all  
things as they come.

This ol' world is full o' cowhides that'll kick  
you fer a goal

When yer settin' an' a-frettin' out the stuffin'  
of yer soul.

Ain't it better to be livin' right side up, to  
face the knocks

Than be carted to the boneyard in a silver-  
handled box?

Be thankful that yer poor enough to know  
the simple things,

The grippin' hand of honest friends, the com-  
fort that it brings.

Be thankful fer the humble shack that shields  
from cold an' rain,  
Be thankful fer the soil to till, the strength  
to garner grain;  
Be thankful you have credit when you haven't  
got the cash,  
To buy the prunes an' boneless beans, the  
tripe an' succotash.

Be thankful fer an appetite that never balks  
ner fails,  
When tacklin' pork an' cabbage, er a mess o'  
shingle nails.  
Drop on yer knees an' thank yer God in  
reverential plan,  
Be thankful to be thankful you kin live an'  
die—a man.



# Pessimism

What's the good o' anything  
In this world o' ours?  
What's the good o' Summertime?  
What's the good o' flowers?  
What's the good o' Wintertime?  
What's the good o' Spring?  
Is there anything to gain  
Hearin' robins sing?  
What's the good o' whistlin' tunes?  
What's the good o' jokes?  
Don't you hate to git around  
Whar there's singin' folks?  
What's the good o' shakin' hands  
Ev'ry time you meet?  
Ain't there lots o' bitter things?  
What's the good o' sweet?  
What's the good o' happiness?  
Kin you tell me? Say—  
Don't you think it's wastin' time  
Watchin' children play?  
What's the good o' workin' hard?  
Put it to the test!  
What's the good o' gittin' tired?  
What's the good o' rest?  
What's the good o' havin' brains?  
What's the good o' health?  
What's the good o' bein' poor?  
What's the good o' wealth?  
What's the good o' anything  
You hear, er do, er see?  
Whar's the good in any man  
That thinks an' talks like me!



# Action

I kin fergive a kickin' hoss  
Or one that will not stand;  
I kin fergive one that will toss  
Me off into the sand.  
I kin fergive a runaway  
That slams me 'gainst the wall;  
But durn a four-legged popinjay  
That will not move at all!

There's lots o' fellers, 'long the pike,  
The fast 'uns an' the slow,  
But wust of all is that ol' tyke  
That stops an' will not go.  
Don't do no good to cuss the gink  
That loafes from morn till night;  
The only thing to make him wink  
Is bran' new dynermite.



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## Loafin'

I contend 'at any man  
'At won't quit workin' when he can  
An' loaf eroun' from labor free  
Ain't fit fer my sassiety.  
Why a man 'll work an' fret  
Hisse'f into a drippin' sweat,  
Is more than I can understan'  
When loafin's plenty in the lan'.

When you die nobody'll care  
Ef you never turned a hair  
To git yourse'f a honored name  
Wrote down in the books o' fame.  
An' all the work you plan an' do  
Will be forgot as quick as you.  
So I'll be durned ef I can see  
What's the good o' industry.

Don't want no boss to gee an' haw  
Me, like some fellers yell, an' saw  
Their cattle, till they lunge an' choke  
Theirse'fs a-gittin' in the yoke.  
Gimme room to loaf, an' 'nuff  
Terbacker fer to chaw an' puff  
An' keep yer work from nosin' me  
An' me an' it 'll jes' agree.

Loafin' is my work an' I  
Will do it well until I die,  
An' when I reach the other shore  
I hope to turn an' loaf some more.  
My airthly goods ain't much an' sich  
As I'd be counted 'ith the rich  
My heart is lazy, but it's light,  
My assets is—my appetite.

Call me anything you will,  
I'm jes' a hayseed coated pill  
A-rollin' this terrestrul ball,  
An' ef you'll set an' cipher all  
The loafers up, you've know'd er seen  
An' I ain't jes' the reel champeen  
I'll kick myse'f to kingdom come  
An' go to work—I will, by gum!





## Cheer Up!

Smile, ol' feller, smile, goldingya!  
Quit yer grouchin' fer a while,  
Lemme see yer face bisected  
With a happy, broad-gauge smile!  
Lay off whinin' an' repinin'—  
Things look blue to-day, I know,  
But the sun'll shine to-morrer  
Ef yer want to have it so.

When yer ailin' yer a-failin',  
Smile awhile an' shout an' dance,  
'Stid o' nursin' tribulation  
Happify each circumstance.  
Pucker up yer lips an' whistle,  
Loosen up yer happy chortle  
An' you'll hear the echo ringin'  
From some poor, down-hearted mortal.





